

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PALERM 00458 01 OF 02 240911Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /066 W

-----071831 241009Z /14

R 230840Z JUN 77

FM AMCONSUL PALERMO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2121

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PALERMO 0458

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: PROVINCIAL PROFILE: ENNA

REF: (A) PALERMO 0348 (B) PALERMO 0078

SUMMARY: A MOUNTAINOUS PROVINCE, ENNA IS THE ONLY SICILIAN PROVINCE WITHOUT A SEACOAST. WITH A TOTAL POPULATION SLIGHTLY OVER 200,000, THE PROVINCE HAS A LABOR FORCE OF 55,000. PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT, PENSIONS, FOREIGN REMITTANCES AND AGRICULTURE, AND TO A MUCH LESSER EXTENT TOURISM, ARE THE MAIN PROPS IN THE PROVINCE'S WEAK ECONOMY. ITS ONLY NATURAL ASSETS: POTASSIUM SALTS MINED AT PASQUASIA (REFTELS), METHANEGAS, AND WATER FROM THE PROVINCE'S SEVERAL ARTIFICIAL LAKES, ARE ALL SHIPPED OUT OF THE PROVINCE FOR PROCESSING OR USE ELSEWHERE. ENNA'S ONCE PROSPEROUS BUT NOW UNECONOMIC SULPHUR MINES ARE BEING CLOSED AND THEIR MINERS GIVEN PENSION INCENTIVES FOR EARLY RETIREMENT. ENNA'S DEPRESSED ECONOMY HAS PROMPTED AN ESTIMATED POPULATION LOSS TO EMIGRATION OF 100,000 PERSONS OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS. MANY OF THE PROVINCE'S TOWNS ARE THUS PEOPLED WITH PENSIONERS AND WITH WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THOSE WORKING ABROAD. FORTUNATELY, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ELSEWHERE HAVE NOT FORCED THESE WORKERS TO RETURN. THE ENNA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, HEADED BY A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 PALERM 00458 01 OF 02 240911Z

INCLUDES THE PSI AND PSDI AND IS BASED ON A RECENT "PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT" WITH THE COMMUNISTS. A SIMILARLY-BASED GOVERNMENT WILL SHORTLY TAKE OVER IN THE CITY OF ENNA ITSELF. WHILE THE NUMEROLOGY OF PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND CURRENT PARTY POSITIONS MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO FORM A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT WITHOUT PCI INVOLVEMENT, THE ENNA CITY GIUNTA COULD CONTINUE TO GOVERN COMFORTABLY WITHOUT DC-PCI

ACCOMMODATION. THE SOLUTION, FOLLOWING THE GRESHAM'S LAW OF CURRENT LOCAL POLITICS, WAS TO SACRIFICE THE CITY GIUNTA TO REQUIREMENTS AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL. THE PCI ACCORDINGLY NOW HAS AN UNPRECEDENTED SAY IN BOTH ADMINISTRATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND SOCIALISTS TO WHOM WE TALKED DURING A JUNE 15 VISIT TO ENNA CITED BOTH THE ABOVE NUMBERS AND DC-PCI RAPPROCHEMENT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL AS THE REASONS AND COVER FOR LOCAL LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH THE PCI. IN SOMETHING OF AN EMOTIONAL CATHARSIS THE PRESENT SOCIAL DEMOCRAT VICE MAYOR OF ENNA, FRANCESCO MANCUSO, LAMENTED THESE DEVELOPMENTS AS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF A PROCESS WHICH WOULD EVENTUALLY DESTROY THE INTERMEDIARY FORCES BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. MANCUSO SAID THE PSDI NATIONAL SECRETARY ROMITA HAD EXPRESSED PARALLEL CONCERNS DURING A RECENT PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH HIM IN ENNA, BUT HAD JUSTIFIED THE PSDI'S PRESENT POLITICAL COURSE ON THE PREMISE THAT THE PARTY COULD NOT STAND TOO DISTANT FROM THE PSI. MANCUSO SHARPLY CRITICIZED THE DC MAYOR OF ENNA'S STATEMENT THAT PCI INVOLVEMENT WAS ESSENTIAL, SINCE THIS IS NOT NUMERICALLY TRUE. THE PCI HAS ALSO TREATED THE LAY INTERMEDIATE PARTIES SHABBILY IN ORDER TO FORGE DIRECT LINKS WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. ON THE STRENGTH OF THEIR PERFORMANCE IN THE CITY COUNCIL, MANCUSO SEEMED PERSONALLY CONVINCED THAT THE PCI'S DEMOCRATIC POSTURE WAS ONLY A TACTICAL MASK.

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PAGE 03 PALERM 00458 01 OF 02 240911Z

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PAGE 01 PALERM 00458 02 OF 02 240945Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PALERMO 0458

2. ROSARIO PELLEGRINO, PSI ENNA PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, SHARED MANCUSO'S DOUBTS ABOUT THE INTERMEDIATE PARTIES' FUTURE IN AN ITALY GOVERNED UNDER DC-PCI AGREEMENT. THE LOCAL PSI, HOWEVER, HAD FOLLOWED PARTY'S NATIONAL PATTERN IN URGING PCI GOVERNMENT ROLE. IF SOCIALIST FEARS ABOUT PARTY'S FUTURE PROVED JUSTIFIED, PSI WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO VIGOROUSLY OPPOSE DC-PCI COLLUSION. (COMMENT: WE HAVE NOTICED IN RECENT CONTACTS WITH SOCIALISTS, BOTH IN THE PARTY AND IN TRADE UNIONS, A CERTAIN ENTHUSIASM AT THE PROSPECT OF ASSERTING VOCAL, POST-BARN-DOOR OPPOSITION SHOULD COMMUNIST-CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT RELATIONSHIP BEGIN TO SUFFOCATE IN-BETWEEN PARTIES.) WHILE PSI HARBORED SUSPICIONS ABOUT PCI, FEELING BETWEEN THEM WAS FAR MORE FRATENAL THAN BETWEEN SOCIALISTS AND DC. PELLEGRINO SAID SOCIALISTS "BASE" COULD SIMPLY NOT STOMACH FURTHER COLLABORATION WITH DC FROM WHICH PCI EXCLUDED. PELLEGRINO ALSO INDULGED HEAVILY IN THEORY - NOW MUCH IN VOGUE LOCALLY - THAT YALTA AGREEMENTS PLACED ITALY IN WESTERN PRESERVE WHERE ALL KINDS OF POLITICAL EXPERIMENTATION ARE POSSIBLE BUT COMMUNIST "TAKEOVER" IS ALLEGEDLY RULED OUT BY EXISTING U.S.-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON SPHERES OF INFLUENCE.

3. ENNA CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS FULLY RECIPROCATED SOCIALIST
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PAGE 02 PALERM 00458 02 OF 02 240945Z

REVULSION AT FURTHER DC-PSI SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP. DC HAD NO CHOICE, THEREFORE, BUT TO SEEK PROGRAM AGREEMENT WITH PCI. ENNA DC CONTACTS HOWEVER, RULED OUT FORMAL PCI ADMISSION TO GOVERNMENT WHICH DC ELECTORATE COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT ACCEPT. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS BELIEVED "PROGRAMMATIC ARRANGEMENT" ALSO REPRESENTED OUTER LIMITS OF COOPERATION FOR PCI BECAUSE OF GRASSROOTS COMMUNIST MISTRUST OF DC. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS OPENLY ADMITTED THAT PARTY HAD WORN OUT INTERMEDIATE PARTIES INCLUDING PSI OVER YEARS OF THEIR COOPERATION WITH DC. THEY SUGGESTED THAT CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS MIGHT EVEN TAME COMMUNISTS IN THEIR TURN. FULL PARTY EFFORT WOULD HAVE TO BE MARSHALLED TOWARD THIS END, HOWEVER, AND FOR INEVITABLE DC-PCI CONFRONTATION WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY SHOULD DC DOMINANCE BE THREATENED.
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